

At times, your child may have pain during their hospital stay. At Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, you can work with the care team to help your child understand and better manage their pain. As a parent or caregiver, YOU play a very important role in helping your child cope with pain.

What can I do to help my child?

Here are some tips to help ease your child's pain:

Tell	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tell the care team what has helped or not helped in the past.• Tell your child it is not their fault that they are going through something painful.
Prepare	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use simple words to prepare your child. Tell them what is going to happen.• It can help your child better manage their pain when they know to expect something that may cause discomfort.
Use soft words	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use soft words with a slow, calm voice.
Be honest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid making promises you cannot keep, such as, "I promise it will not hurt."• Children need honest information to build trust in you and others.
Offer choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give your child a sense of control by offering choices before and/or during procedures.• You could ask, "Would you like to count or take some deep breaths when it is time to get up?"
Be aware	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Try to remain calm and be aware of your feelings. If you are upset, your child may become more fearful.• It is OK to ask for help if you are not able to support your child through a painful procedure.
Comfort	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold your child's hand, or hold them in a comforting position if possible.
Praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When giving praise, avoid saying "good boy" or "good girl."• Instead, comment on your child's positive behaviors, such as "You did such a good job holding still," or "I like the way you let us know how that felt."• If you label your child as being good for not crying, they may think they have failed in some way the next time they cry.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Easing your child's pain, continued

Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tell your child it is OK to cry or feel mad.• Sometimes, crying or showing other emotions is what a child needs to do to get through painful events.
Offer ideas	<p>Talk with your child about different ways to help them get through painful procedures, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breathing with slow, deep breaths or using bubbles to “blow away the pain.”• Squeezing someone’s hand.• Looking at something they like (such as TV, a book or a magic wand).• Imagining their favorite place or doing something they like.• Listening to their favorite music or singing.• Using heat or ice packs. Heat and ice can help ease pain, as well as discomfort after surgery.• Using distraction. Having friends visit can be a great distraction. It can also help to play games like cards or puzzles. Getting your child to use their imagination is key.• Talking to the people around them about something they enjoy. You could ask, “What is your favorite thing to do on a pretty day?”• Remembering this will get better. Remind your child they will not feel pain like this forever.• Getting pet therapy. Ask for a visit from one of our therapy dogs.• Repositioning.• Doing gentle exercises, like stretching.• Getting massaged.

What other resources are there?

Talk with our child life specialists about how they can help. You can also ask your doctor or nurse for other ways to help decrease your child’s pain.

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child’s doctor or a member of your child’s healthcare team about specific care of your child.

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